



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Navajo Code Talker Ernest Yazhe Laid to Rest



BLUFFDALE-Family, friends and fellow Marines came together on Tuesday, Jan. 19 to eulogize and lay to rest Navajo Code Talker Ernest Yazhe at Utah Veterans Memorial Park.

Yazhe served in the Marines as a part of an elite group known as the Navajo Code Talkers during World War II. The Navajo Code Talkers transmitted battlefield messages in an unbreakable radio code based in Diné bizaad.

Yazhe past away from renal failure at a hospice in Holladay, UT. He was 92 years old.

“Ernest Yazhe was among the greatest generation of soldiers who served during World War II. He was a Navajo Code Talker,” said Vice President Jonathan Nez. “Our heroes are passing and we must take the time to honor and preserve their legacy. We need to share their heroic deeds with our children, our grandchildren.”

President Russell Begaye also sent his condolences to the Yazhe family for the loss of a great Navajo family man and hero.

“Today, we celebrate the life of Ernest Yazhe, a humble man who always worked hard. Let us also remember his legacy during this time” - Vice President Nez

“It is with a heavy heart that I learned about the passing of Ernest Yazhe, a Navajo Code Talker and a treasure to the Nation,” he said. “If it were not for our Navajo Code Talkers, our freedom as we know it today would be severely impacted. The Navajo Nation and the greater United States owe a tremendous debt of gratitude to Code Talkers such as Ernest Yazhe. His service will not be forgotten.”

On behalf of the Office of the President and Vice President, Vice President Nez presented a Proclamation Honoring Ernest Yazhe to his daughter Melissa Yazhe who accepted the plaque for her family.

During the services, Yazhe was remembered as a humble and caring man whose life was fulfilled by simple essentials like raising his family, tending to livestock and taking care of his homestead.

Ruth Burton provided the prelude to the funeral services and told people gathered that Yazhe never wanted to have great attention focused on him. He enjoyed the simplicity of his life she said.

Yazhe’s grandson Donovan Baldwin recalled memories he had of time spent with his grandfather. Baldwin portrayed him as a gentle person who would often wake his grandchildren by placing their favorite kittens next to their sleeping bodies.

His memories also included a time when he and his siblings had gotten a set of toy walkie talkies. He recounted that Yazhe taught them some of the codes he used in World War II. He told his grandchildren that the word for artillery tanks was ‘metal turtle’.

The gathered family and friends all paid respectful tribute to the memory of the late Navajo Code Talker.

“Today, we celebrate the life of Ernest Yazhe, a humble man who always worked hard. Let us also remember his legacy during this time,” Vice President Nez said in presenting the Proclamation to the family. “Thank you for your service and bravery, Ernest Yazhe. Your memory will continue to live on in the annals of American history.

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Vice President Nez presented a plaque to the Yazhe family that replicated the Proclamation honoring Navajo Code Talker Ernest Yazhe.



A U.S. Marine presents an honorary flag to Yazhe’s daughter, Melissa Yazhe, at the funeral services.